



Florida House of Representatives
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STOP STONEWALLING
IT'S TIME TO PUT A PERMANENT OIL DRILLING BAN
IN THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION

TALLAHASSEE, FLA. --- House Democratic Leader Franklin Sands (D-Weston) today called on House Republican leaders to end their opposition to a permanent oil drilling ban in Florida waters and to support Florida's small businesses impacted by the BP Deepwater Horizon catastrophe in the Gulf.

In the special session that convenes Tuesday, House Democratic Caucus members expect to sponsor and support legislation that will allow voters this fall to create a permanent ban against oil drilling in Florida's coastal waters. In addition, CFO Alex Sink has outlined a series of important steps for the Legislature to take to guard against future catastrophic threats to our state's economy and environment. She has presented common-sense economic recovery and relief proposals to ensure that Florida's small business owners, citizens and way of life are protected.

"House Republican legislative leaders who like to talk the talk about helping small businesses and promoting our state's economy are not yet walking the walk," said House Democratic Leader Franklin Sands. "They are putting Florida's economy at grave risk in their shameful alignment with petroleum giants opposed to letting voters create a permanent ban against oil drilling in Florida's coastal waters."

In 2008 and 2009, Republican legislators abandoned decades of bipartisan opposition to drilling in state waters. These Republican legislators voted to allow drilling as close as 3 to 5 miles from Florida's shores and were also calling for drilling closer to Florida in federal waters. Additionally, Republican legislators made it clear that they were prepared to persuade the Legislature to pass drilling in state marine waters in the 2011 session until the BP Gulf Oil Disaster occurred this April.

Now, months into the catastrophe in the Gulf, Floridians are learning that these same Republican legislators are shamefully balking at bipartisan efforts to put a permanent drilling ban in the state Constitution.

"Thankfully, Republican leaders' pro-oil pursuits have been at least temporarily tamed," said Sands. "And while a permanent ban would not have prevented the BP disaster, a constitutional prohibition would send a clear signal to future legislators as well as to businesses and anyone interested in investing in Florida that the citizens of Florida recognize the folly of drilling next to our beaches and shores.

"Stonewalling over the special session does not help Florida's economy," Sands added. "It does not help small business. And it does nothing to improve confidence in our state's vitality. The stonewalling of House Republican legislative leaders must come to an end."

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